

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5292

C 98 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring the licensing of physical therapist assistants.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Fairley, Roach, Kohl-Welles, Keiser and Parlette).

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care
House Committee on Health Care & Wellness

Background: Physical therapists are licensed by the State of Washington to examine, evaluate, and test individuals with mechanical, physiological, and functional impairments. They are licensed to use a variety of therapeutic interventions to alleviate these impairments. Some examples are the design of therapeutic exercise, massage, or training relating to posture or movement. Physical therapists must pass an exam administered by the State Board of Physical Therapy in order to receive a license.

Current law defines a physical therapist assistant as a person who has successfully completed a board of physical therapy approved physical therapist assistant program. A physical therapist assistant is not required to be licensed.

Summary: A physical therapy assistant is defined as one who performs physical therapy procedures and tasks delegated by a supervising physical therapist. A physical therapy assistant must be of good moral character, have successfully completed a board-approved physical therapist assistant program, and pass a board-approved physical therapist assistant examination in order to be licensed.

The State Board of Physical Therapy must include a licensed physical therapist assistant as a member. Provisions are made for licensure of those physical therapist assistants who are licensed in another state if the qualification for the applicant were substantially equal to qualifications under this chapter. Provisions are made for license renewal, inactive status, use of the title "physical therapist assistant," and exemption from licensure.

A new section is added that clarifies that insurers are not required to contract with physical therapist assistants; the requirements that health carriers permit every category of provider do not apply to physical therapist assistants. A definition is provided for indirect supervision. The word "assistive" replaces "supportive." Instead of taking effect 90 days after session, Section 2 takes effect December 1, 2008, and the remainder of the bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	44	3
House	94	1

Effective: July 1, 2008
December 01, 2008 (Section 2)